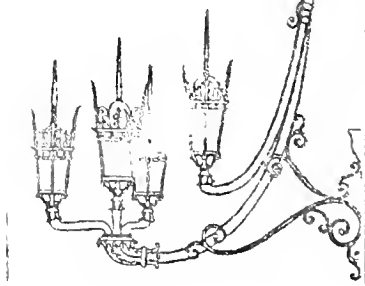


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CITY OF BOSTON

CURRENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

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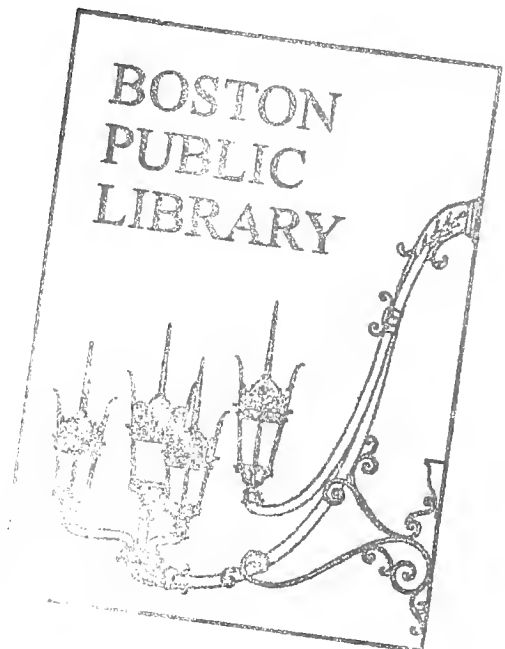


CITY OF BOSTON

CURRENT PROBLEMS AND ISSUES

June, 1972

Boston Redevelopment Authority







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## I. Introduction



## I. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to identify current problems and issues for each Planning District of the City. As such, it represents a preliminary attempt to compile in one place the various needs and concerns in each area of the City, which require a BRA response. Since it is a first effort, the listing reflects the level of information available to us at the present time. It is not intended as a definitive, final list. Rather, it is a working paper that can be reviewed, studied, modified and updated as our understanding of the multitude of problems facing the City broadens and sharpens. Although no attempt has been made to rank problems and issues in order of priority, the Summary and Conclusions section of this report makes note of the more common ones found in most areas of the City.



## II. Summary and Conclusions





## II. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In analyzing the various Planning Districts of the City, it is evident that while many problems are peculiar to particular neighborhoods, a number are found in several neighborhoods or are universal throughout the City. Some examples of issues common to most neighborhoods of Boston are the following:

1. The question of density in housing development as it relates to proposals to construct high-rise complexes.
2. Status and future of local commercial strips within many of the neighborhoods; for example, Dorchester Avenue/Broadway in South Boston, Centre Street in West Roxbury, Harvard Avenue in Allston, etc.
3. Off-street parking and related local traffic problems.
4. Quality of municipal facilities, services and public-improvement programs such as utilities, schools, parks, fire stations, etc.
5. Billboards and unattractive signs which foster blight in both commercial and residential areas.
6. Need for upgrading and rehabilitating older single, two and three family dwellings.

All of the above relate to the overriding task before us in view of the changes in Federal funding anticipated this year. Revenue sharing and community development funding will require that this agency:

1. Develop greater degree of integration among its varied disciplines,
2. Arrive at a citizen participation mechanism that responds to a particular neighborhood as well as the City as a whole, and
3. Establish new City policies for allocating federal funds and other resources available to the City.

Our conclusions by no extent should be considered as complete but rather as an initial outline of the task before us.



### III. Planning Districts - Problems and Issues



## A. ALLSTON-BRIGHTON

### 1. Under-utilized Parcels

**Problem:** A variety of parcels in Allston-Brighton are either vacant, blighted or under-utilized. Their reuse has been proposed by community groups or BRA staff. These sites offer an opportunity such as the North Harvard Urban Renewal Project, of meeting a specific need while at the same time rationalizing and modernizing the pattern of land use.

The sites include:

- (1) Western Avenue and Riverdale Street (proposed by Joe Smith)
- (2) Everett Street near Eric Road (proposed by Joe Smith)
- (3) Union Square (proposed by developer)
- (4) Brighton Center (proposed by BRA-DPP staff)

The problem is, how can these sites be developed for uses appropriate for the community?

**Urgency:** The Community (Joe Smith) would like to see an immediate response by the BRA on Parcels (1) & (2) above. Parcels (3) & (4) represent opportunities which have already been studied on a preliminary basis but which require additional BRA-Community activity.

### 2. Commercial Decline

**Problem:** The major retail area of Brighton (Harvard Street) has problems of insufficient parking, traffic congestion, and others typical of older neighborhood shopping districts.

Other commercial areas of Brighton, Oak Square and Brighton Center, have similar problems but at a smaller scale. The problem is how to make these business areas more viable and attractive.



Urgency: The Community (Joe Smith) has submitted a proposed work program for analyzing Harvard Street. BRA staff is needed.

### 3. Student Influx

Problem: Family housing, single and multi-unit structures, are being converted into student, young professional housing. This activity is carried out by homeowners as well as realtors. The Aberdeen and Allston sections are particularly impacted by this activity.

Urgency: The Little City Hall has requested BRA action on this issue. This problem needs immediate attention since its affects are rapid and widespread.

### 4. Washington-Corey Road NDP

Problem: Federal funding limitations for NDP's may require alternative approaches for implementing the Washington-Corey NDP. One alternative might be to make the landowner a partner in the development.

Urgency: The feasibility of non federally assisted alternatives should be explored immediately in order to prevent delays in the project should the present NDP Application fail to be approved.

### 5. Mixed Industrial/Residential Uses in North Allston

Problem: What is the possibility of rationalizing the mixed residential/industrial pattern of land use in Allston? Is the establishment of an industrial park a feasible and appropriate solution? BRA has suggested to EDIC that they consolidate industrial activities in Allston by developing an industrial park in an underutilized industrial area. Acquisition, marketing, circulation and design studies would have to be carried out.

Urgency: BRA and the Community have proposed a study of the area. Preliminary surveys have been carried out. A resolution of the issue could open up a variety of development opportunities.





## 6. Housing for Families and Elderly

Problem: How can the city conserve and provide low-medium cost housing for families and the elderly?

The price of rent and sales has increased to the point that many families and elderly are forced out of the community, or must pay 30% plus of their income on housing.

Urgency: The Community is constantly complaining of issues relating to this problem. There have been more rent control hearings in Allston-Brighton than in any other area of the City.



## B. BACK BAY/BEACON HILL

### 1. Beacon Hill: Disposition of Bowdoin School Site

**Problem:** It is presently the intention of the School Department to consolidate its operations at the Bowdoin School in the renovated City Hall Annex on Court Square. When this consolidation takes place in 1973, the Myrtle Street building will no longer be needed by the Boston School Department and it will become the responsibility of the Public Facilities Department to find an appropriate use for the property.

A preliminary examination of the site, structure and location of the property indicates the following possibilities for disposition:

- (1) continued municipal use of the building
- (2) use of the building by State government
- (3) conversion to private offices
- (4) use as a private school facility
- (5) conversion of existing building to luxury apartments
- (6) conversion of existing building to elderly apartments
- (7) demolition and reuse as
  - a. off-street parking
  - b. recreational open space
  - c. new luxury apartments
  - d. new elderly apartments
  - e. some combination of the above

**Urgency:** Suffolk County Courthouse, the School Committee and the Beacon Hill Civic Association have made proposals for this site. A proposal for the reuse of the site should be developed by the BRA.



2. Beacon Hill: Cambridge Street (Charles to Bowdoin Street) Development Possibilities.

**Problem:** There is a need for affirmative municipal action with regard to future planning and redevelopment along Cambridge Street. Several city departments, private developers, and civic groups have taken steps to improve, alter, and redevelop Charles Street without the benefit of a plan.

The Beacon Hill Civic Association has formed the Cambridge Street Development Corporation to study the redevelopment of Cambridge Street with foundation funds.

**Urgency:** City action and participation with the Beacon Hill study group or the BRA is imperative to the resolution of this problem.

3. Beacon Hill: North Slope Housing.

**Problem:** Regressive taxes on improvements, the relatively high number of rooming houses, and low number of owner-occupied units on the north slope of Beacon Hill have been principle causes of concern in Beacon Hill. Very few incentives exist to encourage upgrading of the north slope housing stock.

Census data (1960-70) indicated that the population density on the north slope increased 19% compared to 2.8% on the south slope; owner-occupied units decreased 2% on the north and 1.2% on the south; and rents increased 30% on the south compared to 42% on the north.

**Urgency:** Future improvement to the housing stock on the north slope is dependent on a policy plan and review of present zoning controls.

4. Beacon Hill: Coordination and Delivery of City Services.

**Problem:** These problems prevail throughout the Beacon Hill area. Use of Beacon Hill streets as parking lots for the State House, schools, and foundations make parking a severe problem.

**Urgency:** Beacon Hill Civic Groups and residents continually complain to OPS. Priority questionable relative to problems in other areas of the City.



5. Back Bay: Need for Off-Street Parking for Business Areas.

Problem: There is a lack of off-street parking and parking structures for commercial areas along Newbury and Boylston Streets.

Urgency: Future developments like the Bolyston/Exeter proposal may be helpful in solving these problems. Policies concerning parking in Back Bay should be developed in conjunction with improved alternatives for public transit.

6. Back Bay: Need for Elderly Housing.

Problem: Modestly-priced housing for the elderly residents of Back Bay. Several thousand elderly residents are forced each year into higher and higher rent situations.

Urgency: Without relief these residents will eventually be forced to move from the Back Bay.





## C. CENTRAL

### 1. North End

#### a. Population Decline

Problem: The population in the area is declining. There is a definite need to examine the changes that are occurring in the area and the future relationship of the North End to the Waterfront area and the Downtown.

Urgency: This is a low-priority issue.

#### b. Housing for the Elderly

Problem: The population of the area has substantial numbers of elderly persons. The housing stock of the area is often in substandard condition or being rehabilitated to rent beyond the incomes of the elderly.

Urgency: This is a low-priority issue, but the BRA should assist the community in developing a solution to the lack of low-cost elderly housing.

#### c. Parking

Problem: The North End is a densely settled area with very little space available to solve the increasing problems of parking.

Urgency: The little city hall manager has requested assistance from the BRA. The area ought to be examined as to the feasibility of increasing the amount of parking that is available and decreasing traffic movement through the area.

### 2. South Cove

#### a. Chinese Business District

Problem: With the construction of Park Plaza and the South Station Project, their potential impact upon the South Cove area should be examined.

2000

2000

Urgency: The Chinese community is alarmed by this situation. In order to protect the area recommendations are being developed by the staff.

b. Pine Street Inn

Problem: The Pine Street Inn needs a new site to house homeless alcoholic men. The present facility is inadequate to serve the needs of the hundreds of such men in the area who depend on the Pine Street Inn for shelter, a bed to sleep on, a meal, and medical assistance.

Urgency: The BRA has been providing assistance to the Pine Street Inn to relocate the facility to a new site in the South End.

3. Waterfront

a. Parcels A-6, A-7, D-1, D-2, and D-10

Problem: Changes in market situations, developer interest, and lack of new development criteria for these parcels indicate that the use of these parcels should be reevaluated by the staff.

Urgency: Current developer interest from Commonwealth Development and new proposals call for immediate reexamination of the Waterfront Project by the staff.

b. Resolution of Southeast Expressway

Problem: The State has a commitment to remove two on and off ramps from the area around State and Clinton Streets. They have not shown any plans for the development of the area.

Urgency: This issue has been going on for the past ten years and has been holding up development. The Governor will have to order the State Department of Public Works to give the BRA a decision soon because it is holding up the development of Parcels D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, and D-10.



#### 4. Government Center

##### a. Completion of the HEW Building

Problem: Parcel 1 cannot be completed until the Government Center Commission obtains the money from the State to complete the complex which includes the State Office of Employment Security and the Mental Health Center. The HEW Building would include a 40 foot tower and office space.

Urgency: It has been recommended that the BRA use whatever influence it has in the State Legislature in order to get the needed money appropriated.

##### b. Parcel 2-A

Problem: Parcel 2-A was originally designated for use as St. Botolph Chapel. The Catholic Archdiocese no longer wishes to develop this parcel as a Chapel or as a memorial. There is now a problem as to the proper use for this site.

Urgency: This site should be developed, and an appropriate use should be found.



## D. CHARLESTOWN

### 1. Bridge Across Little Mystic Channel

**Problem:** Medford Street runs adjacent to the densely populated Charles-New-Town Housing Project. A new high school is planned on this street as well. The volume of heavy truck traffic moving down Medford Street to the Mystic Wharf (owned by the Port Authority) is a threat to the safety of pedestrians in the area. The proposed bridge would direct this truck traffic to Chelsea Street, facilitating the movement of trucks to the wharf and eliminating the danger to pedestrians.

**Urgency:** A study of the situation is needed to determine costs and sources of funds. The BRA can provide this function.

### 2. Sullivan Square

**Problem:** When the elevated line along Main Street is closed in 1975, the Sullivan Square Station area, now used for equipment storage, can be reutilized. A study needs to be made of the optimum use(s) for this site and the surrounding Sullivan Square area. It is outside of the current Urban Renewal area.

**Urgency:** A brief study of this area is underway now.





## E. DORCHESTER

### 1. The University of Massachusetts

Problem: The location of the new University of Massachusetts campus at Columbia Point creates many problems vis-a-vis the Dorchester community:

- (1) The impact of the student population on the Dorchester housing market.
- (2) The kinds and location of transportation links to the campus.
- (3) The admission policy of the University which will to some extent determine the reality of a "commuter" college.
- (4) Public access to facilities and especially to the waterfront.
- (5) The future of Columbia Point as a community.

Urgency: This is a top priority item.

### 2. Housing

Problem: The three-decker in Dorchester is threatened by deterioration and scattered abandonment. Some units have reached the end of their economic viability and place a burden on the owner-occupant. Several large landlords reduce maintenance as a function of their operations to increase profits.

Potential new apartment construction in Dorchester needs study on an overall basis. Among the proposals for new construction are:

- (1) Neponset Dump Site - one of the few remaining large tracts in the city; it has potential for as many as 1500 units.
- (2) Edison Green Street - this triangular parcel borders Dorchester Avenue and may be suited for elderly housing.



- (3) Norwell Street - the local community would like to provide housing of the town-house type as well as rehab some of the existing structures. Doris Graham is organizing agency involvement.
- (4) Port Norfolk - this waterfront area has potential for high rise development particularly in the O. G. Kelley property which is presently for sale.

Urgency: Immediate attention is needed on the housing situation because of the pressures from slum landlords, speculators, and the University of Massachusetts.

### 3. Commercial Deterioration

Problem: Abandoned and unsightly store fronts occurs on many streets in Dorchester but primarily on Dorchester Avenue. The function of the neighborhood store has changed with the accessibility of shopping centers. Zoning changes, sign control, parking access, and some other methods may be necessary to halt this process.

Urgency: This problem is highly visible to Dorchester residents and is seen in conjunction with housing deterioration. The Planning Department is reviewing Dorchester Avenue in an attempt to determine courses of action to solve this problem.

### 4. Open Space and Recreation

Problem: There is a lack of open space and recreational facilities in many areas of Dorchester. The community also feels that the public should have greater access to and control over the waterfront. There are several potential sites presently being considered to alleviate this problem:

- (1) Bellflower Street - the site of a large fire in 1964, this parcel offers an opportunity for a badly needed play area. The Planning Department is preparing a report on this subject.



- (2) Neponset Dump Site - the MDC has considered locating a schoolboy track facility and other recreation here. There has been no decision made at this time. The recreation would be in conjunction with housing proposal mentioned above.
- (3) Commercial Point - the Gas Company has a proposal for a small park on this site as well as a boat ramp. The BRA has the necessary community support to deal strongly with the Gas Co. in providing the facilities previously agreed to with the BRA.

Urgency: These items are currently involved in negotiations and will continue to present a problem until resolved. The community views recreation areas as having an immediate benign affect on local social problems.



1. Airport vs. Community

Problem: The existing relationship of the airport to the community continues to threaten the long-term viability of the East Boston residential community. The concerted cooperative attention of several City departments, the Massachusetts Port Authority, and appropriate State and Federal agencies is needed to resolve problems implied in MPA plans for the Airport. Important issues that should be dealt with are: noise abatement, suitable noise buffer, treatment of areas where airport and residential areas come together, directing MPA expansion to certain areas, and curbing excessive airport-related truck traffic.

Urgency: Sporadic efforts are ongoing. These efforts ought to be improved because they are not effective, and the MPA is continuing its present policies virtually unhindered.

2. Underutilized Waterfront

Problem: The BRA must take the initiative in guiding the future of this valuable resource.

Urgency: The future viability of the residential community depends on the solution of existing problems. The waterfront is the only resource where physical problems can be solved.

3. Outward Population Movement - Decline in the Quality of Life

Problem: East Boston suffers from many environmental deficiencies such as an aging housing stock, aging commercial areas' antiquated public facilities, noise pollution, inadequate amounts of open space, and inadequate street patterns.

Urgency: The BRA has to expand its activities in this area and play a leading role in examining existing conditions in East Boston and preparing strategies to deal with existing problems.





1. Fenway: Housing for Single and Elderly Persons

Problem: There is an urgent need for moderately priced dwelling units.

If all projected housing projects (Symphony Towers, Church Park, St. Botolph Street) were completed in the next five years (600 units), less than one-half of the present demand would be met.

Urgency: Without a specific program, this situation will continue to deteriorate. This situation has been aggravated by rent hikes. These hikes have forced out fixed income and elderly tenants. The Boston Rent Control Board has taken remedial actions.

2. Kenmore: Uncertainty

Problem: Uncertainty about the future of residential areas along Bay State Road and commercial areas at Kenmore Square. Uncertainty about the growth or decline of institutional land use. Residents, businessmen, property owners, the universities, and public officials desire a better understanding about the future potential of Kenmore Square.

Urgency: This problem deserves immediate attention.

4. Kenmore: Traffic Flow and Illegal Parking

Problem: Traffic volume and flow through Kenmore Square, illegal after-hours parking, overnight parking along Bay State Road, and double parking. Although the traffic signalling system was recently revised, its effectiveness has been hampered by parking and traffic violators; after-hours and student parking throughout the area are a continuing problem in the area.

Urgency: High accident rates, auto thefts, and growing institutional parking demands make it imperative that this problem receive attention.



## H. HYDE PARK

### 1. Barry's Quarry

**Problem:** What types of housing development are appropriate for this site (multi-family? elderly housing? At what density? height?). The inner portion of the site has been designated for development of a southwest Campus High School (for 2,500 pupils). Along Cummins Highway Development Corporation of America (DCA) initially proposed 200 elderly units in a 14-17 story building and 368 family units in a 12-story (800 foot long) building. This initial proposal was delayed by the BRA and alternative proposals have since been under discussion.

In a public hearing near the end of last year, opposition was expressed by community residents from the immediate neighborhoods and from West Roxbury.

**Urgency:** Density and apartments is an issue in Boston's "suburban" communities (Hyde Park, Roslindale and West Roxbury and Jamaica Plain). The BRA must take a position within these communities; sometimes it may require opposing community sentiment to satisfy other goals.

### 2. Cleary Square

**Problem:** Can the vitality of this local business area be strengthened? Can this improvement be tied to Southwest Corridor development? This local Hyde Park commercial district was the subject of a 1970 BRA Planning Study which identified the lack of variety and quality of stores as well as transportation were identified as problems in this area.

**Urgency:** The Southwest Corridor proposal could be a means of bringing improvement to the Square.



## I. JAMAICA PLAIN-PARKER HILL

### 1. Jamaica Plain

#### a. Centre Street Commercial Improvements

**Problem:** The viability of the Centre Street Shopping area is being threatened by limited off-street parking, lack of public or private beautification efforts (poor signing and billboards), deterioration of many commercial properties, traffic congestion along Centre Street and by competition from newer shopping plazas within convenient driving distance of Jamaica Plain. An examination of key vacant parcels is need for possible development of appropriate uses that will strengthen the area.

**Urgency:** The LCH Manager, JP Planning and Zoning Committee and JP Merchants Association are very interested in a study of this shopping area. A work program is being discussed with the community and most of the survey work should be finished by September.

#### b. Impact of Southwest Corridor

**Problem:** The following land use questions concerning sub-areas in the SW corridor merit investigation (some questions may involve input into the BPTR's transportation program package, other's may need support of a wider City-wide program i.e. urban renewal or NDP's).

##### (1) Jackson Square

(a) What type of industrial and/or commercial space could be provided at Jackson Square and how many square feet?

(b) Under what conditions would industrial or commercial space be marketable at this location?



(c) How does this space/location compare to others along the right-of way?

(d) How does a circumferential public transportation system affect the development options in this area? If it is not feasible, what options are available?

(2) Jackson Square to Green Street

(a) What locations are suitable for industrial uses and how many square feet are feasible?

(b) What locations are suitable for housing and how many dwelling units are feasible?

(3) Green Street

(a) What are the land use opportunities at this neighborhood node?

(4) Green Street to Forest Hills

(a) What is the competitive opportunity for light industry in this corridor portion?

Urgency: Identification of land use opportunities and constraints should be at least started for the above nodal points prior to the Governor's final (road or no-road) decision.

c. Code Enforcement Area

Problem: There are parts of Jamaica Plain and Parker Hill which have not been touched by the J. P. Code Enforcement Program. Within the designated areas are boarded up vacant and delapidated structures which blight adjacent areas.

Urgency: SBA and 312 loans need to have increased monies and pumped into the above referred to areas.

d. Availability of Housing Mortgages

Problem: Mortgages have been reported as impossible to obtain in specific residential sections of J. P. The Code Enforcement Area in particular,





it is believed has been "grey-lined" for mortgages by the banks.

Urgency: This problem may have important consequences on the Code Enforcement Program and on attempts to revitalize the residential area.

## 2. Parker Hill

### a. Under-utilized Land (Parker Hill New Neighborhood Site)

Problem: There are approximately 20 acres of vacant and underutilized land on the south slope of Mission Hill. The property is owned by the Lahey Clinic, the Ruggles Street Baptist Church and the City of Boston. The problem is to determine what appropriate feasible uses can be developed on this site.

Urgency: Various community groups would like to see a development take place.

### b. Deteriorating Housing Conditions

Problem: The residential area of Mission Hill is in deteriorated condition. Property has not been maintained, speculation and conversion have led to a blighted environment. Code enforcement has been requested by the community. This or some similar program is needed in order to preserve this residential area.

Urgency: The community has requested code enforcement for over one year.

### c. New Housing

Problem: Roxbury Tenants of Harvard in conjunction with Harvard University have proposed a residential development for the convent site. The City must review this proposal to determine whether the density and mix of units and rent levels meets the needs of the area, and the extent to which it fits into a planning program for the Medical Area and Mission Hill.

Urgency: Since Harvard is moving forward with the proposed program, the city must act now if it is going to have any impact.



d. Affiliated Hospitals Center (AHC)

Problem: The Affiliated Hospitals plan to undertake a massive construction program. The program will have a major impact upon circulation, parking and utilities in the Brigham Circle Area as well as on the housing planned by the Roxbury Tenants of Harvard.

Urgency: The impact of the Affiliated Hospital Center must be evaluated before the city can grant the necessary approvals being sought by AHC.



1. Blockbusting

Problem: Several realtors are soliciting sales on the basis of racial change in portions of Mattapan.

This practice in addition to easy financing by the B.B.U.R.G. Banks has brought rapid demographic change to most of Franklin Field and portions of Mattapan. White citizens view blockbusting as the further incursion of Black families into previously all white neighborhoods while Black citizens see this practice as exploitation by white speculators.

Urgency: This activity is currently limited to a few streets in Mattapan. H.U.D. has formed the Mattapan Task Force, consisting of several community groups and the B.R.A., which in addition to reviewing a broad spectrum of problems in Mattapan, is sponsoring state legislation to stop blockbusting. A combination of legal obstacles, the unavailability of both buyers and sellers, and the collapse of the B.B.U.R.G. system has caused a marked decrease in the frequency of this practice. This issue is still hot but is cooling.

2. Street Crime

Problem: Robberies and assaults, especially along Blue Hill Avenue and in Franklin Field, are seen as a major community problem.

The Mayor's Office of Human Rights and the Office of Public Service have been active in taking steps to reduce the incidence of these crimes. In addition to these efforts, several groups including the Mattapan Neighborhood Block Association have formed private security patrols to police some residential sections of Mattapan and Franklin.



Urgency: The rate of these crimes does not appear to be decreasing, in fact, they appear to be increasing in Franklin Field and along Blue Hill Avenue.

### 3. Deterioration of Blue Hill Avenue

Problem: The decline and subsequent deterioration of commercial areas along Blue Hill Avenue resulting from competition with suburban shopping centers, population changes and security problems is a major problem facing both Franklin Field and Mattapan.

This highly visible deterioration damages the image of the community and is a blighting influence on abutting residential neighborhoods. The incidence of crime is higher along the Avenue than in the residential areas abutting the commercial strip. Portions of the Avenue have become hang-outs for alcoholics, drug addicts and street gangs. The Mattapan Task Force with the assistance of the B.R.A. has been reviewing this problem and to suggest possible strategies for solving it.

Urgency: Substantial public improvements and redevelopment funds will be needed to solve this problem. Concern over this issue is growing within the community.

### 4. Decline of Public Services

Problem: Some neighborhoods complain that police, street cleaning and trash collection services have declined since the changes in racial composition occurred.

The Little City Hall has been directly involved in attempts to improve these services within current city financial limitations.

Urgency: Although this issue continues to be a matter of significant community concern, the Mayor's Office of Public Service is taking steps to alleviate it.





## K. ROSLINDALE

### 1. Bussey Street Site

- Problem:** How should this 5.6 acre site (owned by Maurice Simon) be developed. Development alternatives (as of May, 1971) included Housing (Maurice Simon) and MDC acquisition for open space. The site has certain problems: uneven topography, limited access (the Penn Central Needham Branch tracks is a barrier), Southwest Expressway and MBTA proposed improvements are uncertain, isolation from shopping.
- Urgency:** The staff has reviewed a preliminary proposal submitted by Maurice Simon and has found it not acceptable. Neither he nor MDC has submitted any further proposals to date.

### 2. Roslindale Square

- Problem:** In recent years, the Square has been feeling the efforts of newer, auto-oriented shopping centers--Cantebury, High Point Village and nearby Dedham areas, store deterioration is visible and vacancies have occurred. At the same time, there is severe traffic congestion on Washington and on Corinth Streets. The Square is also affected by the Southwest Corridor proposal (Roslindale Square could become a major access point to or interchange of the SW Expressway). A final influence is the MBTA lines Needham extension which may affect the transportation pattern in the Square.
- Urgency:** When the decision on the Southwest Expressway is made this summer, a better determination concerning Roslindale Square's future can be made.



## L. SOUTH BOSTON

### 1. Housing Abandonment

**Problem:** Housing is being abandoned with resultant spread of blight throughout South Boston with exception of better residential areas. This problem is especially critical around the public housing projects and near the industrial areas.

**Urgency:** Abandonment is reaching a critical point where it is affecting people's confidence in the community.

**Action Suggested:**

- a. Obtain 312-115 Loans and Grants (Certified Area/Code Enforcement)
- b. Assist the community in building small scale new housing to replace abandoned units.
- c. Develop abandonment fighting program.
- d. Utilize vacant land for parks, etc.

### 2. New Housing

**Problem:** South Boston seems to have a potential market for new housing. The lack of adequate, modern units may be keeping people from moving to South Boston and forcing out long time residents who wish to obtain better housing.

**Urgency:** The sooner new housing is constructed the better.

**Action Suggested:**

- a. Work with existing CDC and other community groups to build new housing.
- b. Study zoning regulations and other restrictions to new development.
- c. Obtain confidence of community.

### 3. Impact of U-Mass

**Problem:** U-Mass with it's potential 15,000 students plus faculty and staff



is visible across the bay from South Boston. Residents are fearful of the impact this new complex will have on their rent levels. They are opposed in principal to a lot of students living in the area. Although this issue is of community wide concern, the area that will probably be most directly affected lies between Andrews Square and "L" Street.

Urgency: U-Mass opens to 5,000 students September '73. Speculation and conversion of apartments to student styles is occurring now in nearby Dorchester.

Suggested Action:

- a. Work with community in designing and implementing a planned response.
- b. Work with U-Mass to minimize neccesity of students living nearby.

#### 4. Fort Point Channel

Problem: Community is aware that something is going on and wants to know what. Fort Point Channel inputs into such things as Boston Transportation Planning Review (BTPR) (Third Harbor Tunnel) will have strong effect on South Boston. The development of the South Boston side of the Fort Point Channel will directly affect the industrial area and indirectly all of South Boston.

Urgency: The further Fort Point goes without community involvement, the more negative that involvement is likely to be.

#### 5. Third Harbor Tunnel

Problem: BTPR is currently deciding the alignment of Third Harbor Tunnel through South Boston. Tunnel access roads, toll booth, etc., will take much land. The exact alignment and scheduling can have a large impact on the future of South Boston, particularly the industrial area of the District.



Urgency: This decision on recommended alignments etc., is expected to be made shortly by the BTPR staff.

## 6. Industry

Problem: The invasion of industrial uses into residential area is a problem of continual concern to the South Boston community. The result is not just a mixture of unrelated uses, but often constitutes a hazard to residents because of the traffic and other problems created. This problem is most prevalent along 1st and 2nd Streets and Broadway. The impact of truck traffic is felt throughout South Boston.

Urgency: This problem is an ongoing one and has aroused much community interest.

Suggested Action:

- a. Develop a plan for South Boston designating realistic areas for industrial expansion. Restrict industry to these areas.
- b. Enforce zoning and building codes.

## 7. Army Base - South Boston

Problem: The activities of the Charlestown Navy Yard may be transferred to the South Boston Army Base. This would increase the employment on the base by several thousand creating traffic problems and possibly spurring commercial or even residential development.

Urgency: This is a long term problem.





## M. SOUTH END

### 1. 312 Rehab Loans

Problem: How can the HUD money that was promised by the federal government under 312 be more effectively used? Presently, there is a backlog of \$341,000 that is intended for use in the South End as well as Charlestown and Washington Park. In terms of projects, there are ten under consideration now. Eight additional are being submitted for next month bringing the total to eighteen or approximately \$700,000 waiting for approval by HUD. Since January only three projects have been approved.

Urgency: Since the inception of the 115-312 program in Boston, \$3,874,810 has been received for residential rehabilitation; \$29,900 for commercial and \$16,297 in mixed use. HUD's inability to produce this money is largely a question of federal policy.

### 2. New Housing and the Plight of Small Businessmen

Problem: Small businessmen are finding it impossible to afford the rents of new stores in new low and moderate income buildings. With old housing being torn down and new buildings being put up, small businesses which service the South End have to relocate as well as housing tenants.

Urgency: If this condition persists the people in the South End may find themselves without certain essential services that small businessmen traditionally supply.



### 3. Lack of Open Space & Recreation

Problem: The South End has one of the lowest amount of open space per 1000 population of any district in the city.

Urgency: The problem is really on two levels. There is the immediate problem of finding recreational space for the new housing in the South End. Several sites are being considered. As a high density area intelligent use of existing space is vital. The BRA should survey the area and familiarize itself with prospective sites. Secondly, the BRA should develop a program for the South End providing additional open space.



## N. WASHINGTON PARK/MODEL CITY

### 1. Three undeveloped School Sites

**Problem:** In Washington Park, out of four elementary school sites that were cleared for construction, only the Trotter School (Title I) has been built. The sites on Alpine Street, Homestead Street, and Notre Dame Academy are still undeveloped. The Alpine Street site (I-2) and the Homestead Street site (I-6) have been cleared since 1966. I-8 or the Notre Dame Academy site has been ready since 1971. The problem is a result of the racial imbalance that exists in the area and the strict state requirements for a proper racial mix before it will grant its 65% state aid for construction.

**Urgency:** It has been suggested that the BRA should determine new uses for the sites from which the community could benefit.

### 2. Housing, Community Facilities and City Services

**Problem:** There is a great need for low and moderate income housing, jobs, improved public facilities and services. In particular poor street lighting, lack of sewer improvements, lack of prompt street repair and garbage collection are serious immediate problems for the people in the area and require attention.

Continued efforts to alleviate these problems should be forthcoming from Model Cities and BRA.



## O. WEST ROXBURY

### 1. Saw Mill Wetland Area

**Problem:** The character of the Sawmill area will change within the near future; many groups and public agencies are looking at and planning development within this area; it is urgent that an coordinated land use policy be developed for this area.

Groups focusing on certain parcels in the area include:

- a. Metropolitan District Commission (MDC) presently is identifying parcels it plans to acquire within the wetland area and is considering the construction of a pool adjacent to its hockey rink;
- b. MBTA - considering a station and massive parking area for for its propose orange line extension at the V.F.W. Parkway;
- c. Boston Public Works Department (DPW) - involved in debate about Gardner Street dump; possible expansion? Elimination?
- d. Brook Farm Historical Society - concerned with preservation of Brook Farm as a historic area.

**Urgency:** The West Roxbury LCH Manager is very interested in developing an overall land use plan for Sawmill; the Land Use Planning Committee of the West Roxbury Local Advisory Council should become involved.

### 2. Gardner Street Dump

**Problem:** The dump, as it presently operates, poses many problems to adjacent areas (partially described in #1 above). Other alternative sanitary land fill sites need to be considered and other methods of disposing of solid wastes studied.

**Urgency:** As long as the Gardner Street Dump continues to exist, seepage from the dump will continue to pollute the Charles River; areas within proposed MDC acquisition will have reduced value for recreation





purposes; and dump truck traffic in the area will continue to pose traffic problems. Based on the above, solutions to this problem are urgent.

### 3. Centre and Washington Streets Commercial Area

Problem: Can the Centre-Washington Streets Commercial area become more viable?

It has been suggested that the reasons why many people choose not to drive into the West Roxbury Shopping District include: presence of congesting angle on-street parking, bad traffic tie-up at intersections and lack of off-street parking in the commercial area.

Urgency: At the present time BRA staff is working with the City's Traffic Department and the West Roxbury LCH Manager concerning this situation. Although this problem is not of an urgent nature at the moment, the West Roxbury LAC Subcommittee on Transportation has expressed concern about it in recent weeks.

### 4. Pope Lumber Site

Problem: Many development proposals have been considered for the six plus acre Pope Lumber site behind Centre Street. The current proposal from the MBTA is to take this site by eminent domain for a parking area (for 250-300 cars) and terminal for a feeder busline for its orange line extension station. This proposal would have a significant impact on the adjacent West Roxbury business district and nearby residential areas. The Pope Lumber site has been abandoned for many years; it is zoned for manufacturing. In recent years, interest has been shown in developing the site for high-rise apartments (at least one application has been submitted, and later withdrawn, for an elderly housing development). At the present time, the First Realty Company has an option on the site.



Urgency: An MBTA Needham line (West Roxbury) station and parking lot in this area would have serious impact on the locale. This issue is of sufficient importance to warrant immediate study. The high-rise issue aspects are further discussed below.

## 5. Potential High-Rise Sites

Problem: A number of sites are being debated as being potential high-rise sites within West Roxbury. It is also apparent that the community will try to stop high-rise development from being approved in West Roxbury. Sites being watched closely by the community include:

Conveney Ford (1700 Centre Street)-owned by the Boys Club (approximately 2 acres) at the corner of West Roxbury Parkway and Centre Street. There is concern that the Boys Club may not be able to hold onto the parcel and it may slip to apartments.

Pope Lumber - discussed above.

West Roxbury Crushed Stone - a very large area already one developer is trying to sell high-rise apartments to the adjoining residents and has met with the community.

Rockland Street/Washington Street - a developer is seeking a variance for the development of eight apartment buildings in this area.

Urgency: Community opposition to apartments apparently runs deep in the West Roxbury area (as it does in Hyde Park and, to a lesser extent, in Roslindale). The question should the BRA go along with community interests and limit high-rise development in West Roxbury, appears to have far reaching implications not only for this section of the City, but for many others as well. The City's response to it may very well shape the future of its outlying so called "suburban" residential areas.



C10 Boston Redevelopment  
BRA2 Authority. #1

AUTHOR

City of Boston: Current

TITLE

Problems & Issues. June 1972.

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